

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

ENGLISH NATION.

Tuesday, January 29. 1706.

THE Complaint of the Tradesmen and Manufacturers against Publick Mourning, took up the last of these Papers; I cannot quit the Subject without subjoining to the Grievance, the *Remedy*, and some short Essay, at what is the properest-Method to redress or retrieve this Disaster to Trade; for I cannot but call it a Disaster.

Her Majesty's Household is now the Center of Fashions; we used to pretend to fetch them all from *France*, the *French* Humour being not only more refin'd that way than ours; but their Customs seem'd more adapted to our Practice at that time than usual.

But the War has finish'd this Foppery, by the long Interval of 18 Years almost continued breach of Correspondence, and the Invention of the *English* Ladies communi-

cated by Taylors, Mantoe-makers, Upholsters, &c. supplies our occasion with Variety enough, and we have no more need to send expresses to *France* to know when our Shoes shall have high Lappets, and when none; when narrow Toes, and when broad.

As the Household is the governing Standard of Fashion, it is absolutely in her Majesty's Breast, when the People run into any Exreme of Habit, to the Detriment, General Decay, and Destruction of Trade, to encourage or discourage, oppress or relieve, and to crush any thing or Fashion, that upon due Consideration appears destructive to the Publick Stock and Wealth of the Nation: And as this is a peculiar to her Majesty, and by the Nature of the thing wholly vested in the Royal Power, so the Parliament plainly acknowledge it to be so, when being
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applied to by Petition of the Tradersmen, the Committee voted an Address to be presented to her Majesty, importing, That the *Petitioners had fully proved their Allegations*, and that they should humbly Address to her Majesty to relieve them, as in her Royal Wisdom shall seem meet.

If any Man shall object here, and enquire how they can be liev'd; how the Queen can direct the People, or confine them to an Order, when they shall wear Black, and when not, and that it is not in the Prerogative-Royal to prescribe what colour'd Clothes any Body shall wear; I must answer to such,

Regis ad Exemplum was the first Proverb that, as before, was the Ruin of our Gentry, and this very thing will reform the Mischief: 'Tis true, it is not in her Majesty to limit or confine me or any Man to what Colour, or what Quality my Clothes shall be; but 'tis in her Majesty's Power, undoubtedly, to regulate the Habits of her own Household Servants and Attendants; and this is all that is requir'd to remedy so great an Evil; for as, when the Queen is in Mourning, no Man comes to Court in Colours; so when the Queen is out of Mourning, no Man comes there in Black; and her Majesty has nothing to do but to shorten the time of the Court's Mourning.

If therefore her Majesty pleases but to make a Publick Order, that no Mourning for Foreign Princes, shall last any longer than a Month, or some such settled time.

Or if her Majesty pleases to Order, That none of the Household shall appear in Black on occasion of State-Mourning, unless for the Death of Crown'd Heads, or such as her Majesty shall appoint.

Either of these two trifling Concessions would regulate this Evil, and restore Trade to its due Channel.

If any Man was to look back to the strange Excess this foolish and very Modern Custom was arriv'd to; how the whole Kingdom, tho' but newly gone out of Mourning for the late King, run into Deep Mourning, and that for six Months, for the Dutchess of *Holftein*, a Lady not one in 40 so much as knew by Name all over the Kingdom; how the Intermissions of Mourning were but just long

enough to decoy the Mercers, and Lace-Men and Weavers in prospect of Trade to furnish themselves with Stocks of Goods, and then return again into Black, and throwing their Goods on their hands, to the Tune of ten thousand Pounds a Man, leave them to Spoil, grow useless and unfashionable upon their hands.

Add to this, the plain Prospect of a great many foreign Princes and Princesses, of whom in the Course of Nature it may be said, as *Esaü* said of his Father *Isaac*, *The days of Mourning for them are at hand*: if the Custom should prevail in *England*, as it has done, we shall never be out of Mourning for many Years, but by such small Intervals as will not permit any necessary Launching into Trade, or encourage Tradersmen to venture upon colour'd Goods.

This Trade will be reduc'd; thousands of Families be turn'd out of their Employment, which they have been bred up to, and by which they got their Bread, and strange Scenes of Misery and Poverty will appear among them; and we that have all the Reasons in the World to encrease the Consumption of our Manufactures, and above all, that talk so much of it, shall be the only People in the World that pull it down with our own hands, and send the diligent People to beg their Bread, or to search for it in Labours they are unacquainted with, have been untaught and unpractis'd in, and in which must work with intollerable Disadvantages.

All this Evil will sink at once, and Trade return to its Native Channel, if her Majesty pleases but to exercise that Authority, which by the Nature of her Household-Government is properly her own, and which the Parliament by the General Concession have own'd, lies entirely in her Royal Breast.

Nor is there any need, that this Authority of the Queen should extend to abridge any of her Majesty's Household wearing Black, or any thing else as their Fancies Guide them; or that they should not wear Mourning upon their own private Occasions; it only points at preventing its being a stated Mode for Habit, so frequent and so long

in the Household, as to lead the People, who take their Rise and Patterns from the Court, to follow them in such a general manner, as has been mention'd.

Nor does this require, that due and needful Respect should not be shewn to the Families and Obsequies of Foreign Princes, and especially of such as have any known Relation to the *English* Court or Crown; but it would be very hard, that the Nation should be oblig'd to Mourn in a Litteral Sense as well as in Shew; and that the Respect of Mourning, shewn by the Court and Gentry, should run to that heighth, as to make the Poor Mourn too for want of Bread; those for Loss of a Related Prince these for want of Trade and Subsistence.

Nor can I refrain taking Notice here, that even while these Papers were Writing, the News Arriv'd of the Death of her Late

Majesty, the Queen Dowager of England, at Lisbon; and as this has some nearer Respect to England, than several other Cases would have, 'tis a New Alarm to Trade; 'tis a Checque to those Tradesmen, who in Prospect of a Spring Trade now advancing, and especially Encourag'd by the Parliaments forwarding their Petition to Her Majesty, and Concurring with their Complaints, were beginning to Employ the Poor, in furnishing themselves with sufficient quantities of Goods against the Trade should advance; but are now Thunder-struck again, with Apprehensions of a fresh Mourning; which if by Her Majesty's Prudence, and wonted Care, of her Poor depending Subjects, is not prevented, will be the Ruine of many a Poor Family, and an intolerable Grievance to Trade.

MISCELLANEA.

I Cannot refrain Noting here, that having the Gift of a Charitable Stranger, to bestow among Poor Families, as has been already observ'd; I have among a great many Objects of Distress, been Solicited by a Worthy and Reverend Orthodox Divine, of the Church of England, in behalf of a Family that have Liv'd well, but Reduc'd to very Distress'd Circumstances, and the Principal thing that has been their Destruction in Trade, and which that Gentleman uses as a good Argument, is the Decay of Trade, by frequent Publick Mournings; the Person being a Milliner by Trade.

I do not Instance this, as if he was the only Man, that has been Ruin'd by Publick Mournings; and doubt not, but I might be Furnish'd on a short Enquiry, with a large Variety of Misery, introduc'd by this Fatal Custom; but if it has so visibly been the Reduction of Families, I am led by this Instance to conclude, this Matter wants nothing, but to be rightly Represented to the

World; to make other People as sensible of it as I.

I have no Interest to pursue in this Debate, I am no way concern'd in Trade, nor any Sufferer by the Exorbitance of Mourning; I am only the Officious Solicitor of other Peoples Advantage: and tho' wholly unacquainted, either with Weaver or Throwster, Silkmen, Lacemen, or Manufacturers; I become the willing Advocate of their Interest, without any Pay or Consideration; if I do them any Service, 'tis the utmost Reward and Expectation of the Author, to render this Paper not Diverting only, but useful.

I have thus open'd the way to their Relief; if I were to advise some of the Heads of the Trades concern'd, there remains another Step, which might further put it forward, to the Compleating their Deliverance, and which to any that desire it, I shall be ready to Communicate by Letter or otherwise; and thereby farther Testifie,
that

that I am not Talking of Trade only, but willing to act in my Sphere for its Publick Encouragement, in any thing I am capable ; and since I ask nothing for my Advice, let him that will serve them Cheaper, take the Work out of my Hands and welcome.

After a Melancholy Discourse, of the Complaints and Miseries of the Poor, give me leave a little, to Relax the Readers Thoughts with the following Observation, sent to me by Letter, on occasion of the Weather, which was for three or four Days very severe, and seem'd like to continue so.

Mr. REVIEW,

MOST of our Almanack-Makers, Barometer Men, and such sort of People, take upon them to tell us, what sort of Weather it will be, which way the Winds blow ; when it will Snow, or Rain, or Freeze, and the like ; and some of them tell us, there are certain Rules they go by.

It would not be Ungrateful to the Publick, if you would inform us, by what Rule they go, that tell us of the present Time.

Gold-Smith's Almanack, for the end of January Fine Mild Weather, for the beginning of January, Frost and Snow ; whereas, the former part of the Month was mild Weather ; and now a deep Snow and Severe Frost.

Moor's Almanack says, the Month ends with Moderate Weather, and we all find it immoderately Cold ; and so of the rest.

If this Gentleman had ask'd me, how come the Weather and the Almanack-Makers Accounts to differ ; I should have answer'd, because they were mistaken ; and the Answer had been as good, as the Question could have Demanded.

But to ask me what Rules they go by, is a Question much easier Answer'd ; why the Rule of Picking your Pockers, what Rule should they go by ? And as long as, there are Fools to be Deceiv'd, there will never want Knaves to Deceive them, especially when they can get by it too.

The Conjectures of the Weather, have really so much Guess Work in them, that it cannot but be acknowledg'd, the Nicest Calculations are not to be depend'd upon,

and the Text is Literally made Good, that the Wind blows where it listeth—I allow, that our Barometers may give some Light, and the Alterations of Weather, may be seen in our Tubes, by the Mercury advancing or falling, as the Air is influenc'd by Vapours, more or less, a long time before it is known by the Consequences ; but for a Calculation of Winds and Weather, before Nature has Determin'd it aloft in the Elements ; I am free to to Pronounce it a Cheat, and think my self Philosopher enough to maintain it.

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